

Voting Meeting

October 13, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS

- Adam Krantweiss, Ph.D., **President**
- Jacob Shiffrin, **Vice President**
- Garrick Blalock
- Erin Croyle
- Sara Garner
- Todd Fox
- Jill K. Tripp
- Emily Workman
- Karen Yearwood

RECEIVING AND HEARING OF DELEGATIONS

PUBLIC COMMENT

(View the video recording starting at 0:18)

- **Senior Property Tax Exemption**
 - Two community members urged the board to reconsider the district's senior property tax exemption income thresholds
 - The speakers described financial hardship from losing the exemption and raised concerns that seniors may be forced to leave their homes or limit work
 - They asked the board to consider tying eligibility to a local living wage benchmark, regularly reviewing income thresholds, and bringing the issue back for public discussion soon, to implement changes for the next tax year
 - The speakers also acknowledged that expanded exemptions would shift costs to other taxpayers and called for evaluation of the fiscal impact
- **Classroom Technology Policy: Caregiver and Student Perspectives**
 - Several parents and one student raised concerns about student screen time and called for a more balanced approach to classroom technology
 - Concerns raised included addiction, attention, mental health, cyberbullying, privacy and surveillance, artificial intelligence (AI), and engagement-maximizing platforms
 - The speakers' requests of the district included:
 - Reduce screen time, especially in grades K–2, and limit or eliminate one-to-one devices
 - Increase transparency about vendors, apps, data collection, spending, and classroom technology use
 - Evaluate technology's benefits against its risks and provide more traditional instructional materials
 - Teach digital literacy and critical thinking about persuasive design, misinformation, privacy, and AI limitations
 - Some of the parents described efforts to delay smartphone use and asked the district to better support families seeking less screen time

- Forty-two families signed a pledge to delay smartphones until at least ninth grade, with roughly half aiming to wait until age 16
 - School-required apps and assignments can undermine families' efforts to limit screen use
- Some also raised concerns about Scientology-affiliated human rights videos recently shown to third- and sixth-grade students, including their selection, accuracy, racial representation, and age appropriateness
- **PTA Council and Community Engagement**
 - A PTA Council representative outlined efforts to gather family and educator feedback and support informed conversations about school technology:
 - A four-part family webinar series covering middle school tech use
 - Organized community conversations about tech use
 - Educator survey on daily and weekly device use, apps, monitoring methods, challenges, and training
- **Classroom Technology Policy: Educator Perspectives**
 - Several educators shared both the instructional benefits of technology and concerns about its impact on students and classroom practices
 - Benefits include immediate feedback, differentiation, accessibility, progress monitoring, and individualized pacing
 - Concerns include screen time, addiction, cumbersome applications, pressure to use Canvas, and misuse
 - The speakers' recommendations for the district included:
 - Requiring teacher or parent authorization before students access devices rather than allowing unrestricted use
 - Involving students, teachers, IT staff, and library staff in policy discussions
 - A one-year program review that pauses new technology investments for the remainder of 2026–27 and includes a research-based audit with student input
 - Evaluating screen time, assessments, Canvas, devices, AI, and elementary intervention periods to inform the 2027–28 plan
 - Age-appropriate safeguards, less technology in early grades, paper testing options, and supervised educational AI use

BOARD RESPONSE

(View the video recording starting at 52:14)

- **Classroom Technology Policy**
 - Some members urged the board to take action sooner while continuing to collect data, review other districts' approaches, and make adjustments
 - Members emphasized the need for a flexible, regularly reviewed policy that addresses technology's risks while recognizing its importance for some students, including those who rely on it to communicate
 - The board discussed the importance of providing teachers with appropriate training and access to non-digital materials
 - The topic will be discussed at an upcoming policy meeting
- **Property Tax Exemptions**
 - Board members acknowledged community concerns about school property taxes and the inequities in state and federal school funding
 - Members noted recent requests for exemptions from groups such as veterans and EMS workers, which may differ from state or city exemptions
 - The board plans to review exemption requests and discuss them as part of upcoming budget planning

STUDENT REPS

(View the video recording starting at 1:02:05)

- Student reps from Ithaca High School and Lehman Alternative Community School (LACS) shared recent updates from their school
- **Ithaca High School**
 - Student Reps: Lily Cowder, Judah Kischnick, Jingying Xu, and ZiQin Yang
 - Topics Addressed:
 - Recent events, including the first schoolwide assembly of the year and senior government trip
 - Upcoming open house (October 15) and Seal of Biliteracy information meeting (October 27)
 - Appreciation that the 2027 graduation will be one unified ceremony
 - Recent student-led anti-racism presentations for 10th graders
 - Fundraising and donation requests for the annual Fall Festival
 - Student rep plans for the school year, including surveys on cell phone and technology policies
- **Lehman Alternative Community School**
 - Student Reps: Nova Mooney and Abe McCloud
 - Topics Addressed:
 - Recent school events and activities, including a well-attended open house and the annual fall retreat
 - Start of student committees
 - First Science Olympiad meeting and recap of last year's achievements

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

DR. BROWN

(View the video recording starting at 1:12:49)

- **Extended School Day Planning**
 - Superintendent Luvelle Brown outlined the district's plans to extend the school day starting in 2027–28 and described the planning and community engagement process
 - The new ITA contract provides for an additional 30 minutes of instructional time at the elementary level and 15 minutes at the secondary level
 - Dr. Brown plans to present a recommended schedule to the board in February, allowing time for board and community discussion
 - Community stakeholder meetings are planned for later this fall, along with a community-wide survey
 - Planning considerations include transportation, staffing costs and other contractual obligations, food service, and operational costs
 - Costs associated with the settled ITA contract are already established; additional costs related to transportation, operations, and other bargaining units require further analysis and negotiation

SCHOOL DISTRICT BUSINESS

TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS

(View the video recording starting at 1:21:07)

- District administrators — including Superintendent Luvelle Brown, Assistant Superintendent for HR and Technology Zach Lind, Boynton Middle School Principal Lauren Wright, Ithaca High School Principal Caren Arnold, and Fall Creek Elementary

Principal Tara Caiza — provided an overview of how technology is used across the ICSD, including its role in instruction, accessibility, student engagement, and curriculum delivery

- **Policy Framework**
 - Federal and state policies, BOCES guidance, district policies, and recommendations from organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Psychological Association inform the district's approach to educational technology
 - Established guidelines govern student access, internet filtering, device management, and data privacy, while the district makes implementation decisions within those frameworks
- **Classroom Technology and Instruction**
 - Technology is viewed in the district as a resource for teachers, with use varying by classroom and curriculum needs rather than following a required daily schedule or minimum screen time
 - The Technology Department focuses on maintaining reliable systems and providing tools that support teachers' instructional goals
 - Examples included combining digital and printed reading activities, adapting materials to students' reading levels, and using audio and video projects to build creativity and communication skills
 - Assistive communication devices and built-in tools such as Google Docs voice typing help students with disabilities access curriculum, express themselves, and participate more fully in classroom learning
 - The district's approach to classroom technology grew out of community discussions about expanding access to interactive boards and student devices roughly 11–12 years ago
- **Technology Support Tools**
 - The district uses a broad range of software across its 12 schools and 17 buildings, including student information systems, administrative and security tools, teacher resources, and student learning applications
 - Compared with eight or nine years ago, the district has reduced the number of tools it uses, prioritizing student data privacy and instructional goals
 - Teachers cannot independently introduce unapproved software for classroom use; tools are generally selected and approved as part of a curriculum or to support specific units, courses, or learning activities
 - More specialized software may be used for particular subjects, such as engineering and design, especially in higher grades
 - Administrators said future discussions should clarify what counts as "educational technology," given the range of tools and purposes
- **Access, Privacy, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Safeguards**
 - The district uses Clever to provide students with access to approved applications and Linewize to filter network traffic
 - Internet filters are calibrated by school level, with access becoming more permissive as students advance through the district
 - Teachers also have tools to manage classroom device activity, though administrators acknowledged that no filtering system is perfect
 - The district does not directly provide students with generative AI tools, though some approved applications, like Canva, may include AI features
 - Administrators said broader stakeholder discussion is needed to determine how AI tools should be used in schools
- **Addressing Technology Concerns**
 - Families are encouraged to raise classroom technology concerns with the teacher first, then the principal if needed

- Significant technology-related issues should be reported promptly to the district's Technology Department
- **Instructional Effectiveness**
 - Administrators emphasized that technology should be evaluated based on whether it supports instructional goals and improves learning experiences
 - The district uses frameworks such as the SAMR model to consider what students should learn, whether technology supports those objectives, and how it contributes to the learning process
 - Teachers are encouraged to ensure students understand why they are using a particular tool and to assess whether it's effective
 - Administrators stressed that evaluating technology should go hand in hand with evaluating instructional practices

Board Questions and Discussion

- **Evaluating Technology's Benefits and Potential Harms**
 - Board members asked how the district evaluates technology's effectiveness beyond whether students achieve learning objectives, including how it assesses potential negative effects
 - Administrators explained that they regularly work with teachers and families to address technology-related challenges, adjust device use, provide training, and consider non-digital alternatives
 - Discussion highlighted the difficulty of evaluating individual tools when students may reach the same learning goal using computers, paper, or assistive devices
- **One-to-One Devices in Early Grades**
 - Board members requested evidence about the impact of one-to-one device use in pre-K through second grade compared with classrooms that use technology less frequently
 - They raised questions about free-choice use, students' understanding of educational applications, and potential harms
 - Members also questioned whether differing teacher practices create inequitable experiences and called for clearer districtwide expectations
 - Administrators clarified that kindergarten and first-grade classrooms have access to the same sets of tools, including iPads, but teachers determine how and when to use them based on student and classroom needs
 - The district has no established screen-time limits or required daily device-use schedules; building teams and teachers may make their own decisions
- **Assistive Technology and Equitable Access**
 - Board members discussed the benefits of assistive technology for students with disabilities while questioning whether technology can have unintended costs for students' social and educational development
 - Administrators explained that iPads and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices can support nonverbal students' communication and help classmates become familiar with those communication methods
 - The discussion emphasized that technology use varies based on the students in each classroom and their individual learning and accessibility needs
- **Curriculum and Digital Tools**
 - Board members asked when digital tools supplement an established curriculum versus function as curriculum themselves, particularly in elementary grades
 - Board members emphasized the importance of providing teachers with coherent curriculum resources to reduce the need to create materials independently and help ensure consistent learning experiences

- Administrators highlighted the range of technology-related learning opportunities in secondary schools, including media arts, digital design, programming, cryptography, statistics, digital electronics, and virtual courses offered through partnerships with higher education institutions
- Board members were encouraged to consider technology across the full K–12 experience, including how foundational learning supports more advanced opportunities in later grades
- **Changes to Classroom Practices**
 - Administrators said educators are already reviewing technology use and adjusting practices, including shifting away from Chromebook-centered instruction and creating printed materials and interactive notebooks
 - Some board members emphasized the importance of seeing classroom examples of both effective technology use and alternatives before considering broader policy changes
- **Board Authority and Potential Policy Development**
 - Board members discussed the board's authority over curriculum, purchasing, budgets, and policy
 - Legal counsel suggested that a curriculum-focused discussion could be an appropriate way to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of technology in supporting learning objectives
 - Members discussed referring the issue to a committee, gathering data and educator input, and reviewing other districts' approaches
- **Next Steps**
 - Board members requested written responses to the questions they had submitted before the presentation, noting that not all had been addressed
 - Administrators called for clearer definitions of "screen time," including distinctions between whole-class displays, individual devices, and independent use, and suggested a public-facing FAQ
 - The district agreed to prioritize answering the board's questions, clarify ambiguous questions where necessary, and prepare responses in a format accessible to the broader community
 - Members expressed interest in continuing the discussion to develop appropriate guardrails that preserve technology's educational and accessibility benefits while addressing potential harms and promoting equitable learning experiences

BOARD GOALS AND OUTCOMES

(View the video recording starting at 2:18:05)

- The board considered a **motion to adopt the goals** they established during their recent development session:
 - The board will center measures of student progress in everything it does
 - The board will support the district's educational mission through responsible long-term oversight of district finances
 - The board will model civil and collaborative decision-making as it implements evidence-based practices in governance
- **Discussion and Amendments**
 - One board member questioned whether the goals were ready for approval, noting that some board members were absent from the development session and that the wording differed from what they recalled
 - A friendly amendment was proposed to replace "evidence-based" with "evidence-informed"
 - Concerns were also raised that the term "student progress" was too vague and that the goals left too much room for interpretation

- Other board members supported adopting broad goals, noting that subsequent objectives would clarify terms like student progress
- **Final Action**
 - The motion to adopt the goals, as amended to replace "evidence-based" with "evidence-informed," passed 5-2

CELL PHONE DATA

(View the video recording starting at 2:23:39)

- District administrators presented updated data on cell phone ban violations
- **Data Collection and Reporting**
 - Administrators have been using professional learning community (PLC) meetings to review data, align tracking practices, and identify duplicate referrals; they will continue to review the data twice monthly
- **School-Level Enforcement**
 - At Ithaca High School, students are reminded of the policy in physical education classes; violations result in phone confiscation and a referral
 - The middle schools use a warning system intended to provide opportunities for education and communication with students and caregivers; after three warnings, a referral is recorded in SchoolTool
 - Front office staff track warnings and device confiscations and communicate with caregivers
- **Demographic Data and Referral Records**
 - A student representative questioned the collection of student demographic data, including race, gender, and age
 - Administrators and legal counsel explained that state requirements mandate demographic tracking to monitor potential disparities in discipline, particularly the disproportionate discipline of students of color and male students
 - Cell phone referrals are recorded in SchoolTool because of the system's structure, but they do not automatically constitute formal disciplinary incidents, which are defined as in-school or out-of-school suspension
 - Legal counsel further explained that in the ICSD, referral information is confidential and not shared with colleges, universities, the military, or potential employers
- **Evaluating Success**
 - Administrators noted that approximately half of the referrals in the data reviewed involved duplicate referrals for students
 - A potential indicator of success would be a reduction in students receiving multiple referrals, which might suggest that interventions and communication with caregivers are working
- **Request for Follow-Up Data**
 - The board approved a motion to receive an update in December on overall cell phone ban violations and duplicate referrals with a 5-2 vote

AWARD FOR PROPERTY VALUATION RFP

(View the video recording starting at 2:49:58)

- The board approved a motion approving the award of the property valuation request for proposals (RFP) to Pyramid Brokerage

AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(View the video recording starting at 2:51:48)

- The board appointed Garrick Blalock, Jill Tripp, and Todd Fox as Audit Committee members for 2026-27

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

(View the video recording starting at 2:53:29)

- The board approved a [motion to accept the 2025-26 independent audit report](#)

OTHER BUSINESS

OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS

(View the video recording starting at 2:54:16)

- **Board Liaisons**
 - Board members announced that [school liaison assignments](#) have been made and agreed to add the topic to an upcoming agenda to clarify liaison responsibilities
 - **Proposed West Hill Development**
 - Board members discussed community concerns about the proposed development adjacent to LACS and agreed it is generally not a board matter
 - Members discussed communicating with the administration and responding to community concerns
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UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Dates are subject to change. [View the up-to-date board calendar.](#)

Tuesday, October 20

- 5 p.m. Facilities Committee Work Session
- 6 p.m. Finance Committee Work Session

Tuesday, October 27

- 6 p.m. Board Voting Meeting

Tuesday, November 3

- 5 p.m. Policy Committee Work Session

HELPFUL LINKS

- [Board Webpage](#)
- [Voting Meeting Recordings](#)
- [Committee Work Session Recordings](#)